

VZCZCXRO6550
OO RUEHDBU
DE RUEHMO #4505/01 2561318
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 131318Z SEP 07
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3801
INFO RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RUEHZG/NATO EU COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 MOSCOW 004505

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/07/2017

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PINR](#)

SUBJECT: FUNDAMENTALS OF RUSSIAN FOREIGN POLICY CONTRIBUTE
TO TENSION WITH THE WEST

REF: A. MOSCOW 4305

[B](#). MOSCOW 4185

Classified By: Ambassador William Burns for reasons 1.4 (b,d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Foreign Minister Lavrov's strong rhetoric during his September 3 remarks on the course of Russian foreign policy, and in particular his use of the term "red lines," differs little from previous GOR statements. While Lavrov emphasized Russia's commitment to cooperation with the West, experts say that these remarks are the latest in a series of GOR statements that articulate how and why U.S.-led positions on Kosovo, Iran, missile defense (MD), and other thorny issues remain fundamentally at odds with the "principles" underlying Russian foreign policy. These principles include: 1) gaining international recognition as a great power and maximizing Russia's global influence; 2) defending territorial integrity of sovereign states; 3) promoting the inclusion of all stakeholders, even the "undesirables," in peace settlements; 4) minimizing the prospects for further expansion eastward of NATO; and 5) expanding Russian exports, including arms, to any country with the cash. Analysts agreed that these principles inevitably contribute to the current tensions in Russia's relations with the West. End Summary.

Lavrov Speech Stresses Cooperation, But No More Concessions

[1](#)2. (C) Lavrov's September 3 remarks to students of Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO) focused on the course of Russia's foreign policy and Russia's role in the international community. He repeated familiar themes that Russia desires only to play a responsible role in the international community and values its relations with the West, particularly with the U.S. and EU. He stressed that governments have been "emancipated" from the Cold War, and proposed that Russia "and its partners" work "in a concert of powers" to address issues of mutual concern. However, Lavrov underscored Russia's "red lines" on issues that threaten "Russian national security interests and international legal order," listing Kosovo and U.S. MD plans in Europe as two issues that fall in that category. Lavrov pointed out that "Russia cannot be bargained with" and will defend its interests "to the end."

[1](#)3. (C) Although most analysts observed the tone of Lavrov's remarks was sharp, nobody thought he said anything new. MGIMO Dean Alexey Bogaturov only noted that Lavrov "used new expressions to convey old concerns." Experts agreed that like previous remarks by the foreign minister, Putin, and other senior officials, Lavrov's September 3 remarks attempted to articulate the fundamentals of Russian foreign policy and explain how these principles clash in many ways with U.S. and EU foreign policy goals. Specifically, the principles of foreign policy articulated by Lavrov force Russia into a position of "no negotiation" on issues like

Kosovo and MD, and in general a tougher stance on other Western initiatives, such as a tough UNSC resolution against Iran and possible NATO expansion.

Gain International Respect and Influence

14. (C) Resurgent Russia is obviously seeking international recognition, particularly from the U.S., for its recovery from political, economic, and social disrepair. According to President of the New Eurasia Foundation Andrey Kortunov, Putin had clearly embarked on an "integrationist" foreign policy at the beginning of his second presidential term, which was fueled by the 9/11 terrorist attacks and good relations with key leaders like President Bush and former leaders such as PM Berlusconi, President Chirac, and Chancellor Schroeder. However, a string of perceived anti-Russian initiatives -- e.g., U.S. withdrawal from the ABM Treaty and current MD plans, Allies' refusal to ratify the Adapted CFE Treaty, the failure to secure a Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with the EU, the further expansion of NATO, and Russia's delay in gaining entry into the WTO -- dashed Putin's hopes.

15. (C) Public Chamber Committee Chairman Andranik Migranyan said that, as a result, the Kremlin concluded that the U.S. and the West will pay attention to Russian interests only if they are forced to do so. This means no more concessions on key foreign policy interests; the West must prove in action (and not just in words) that it takes Russia seriously. Deputy Director of the U.S. and Canada Institute Viktor Kremenynk went so far as to speculate that, if President Bush would have sought Putin's input on U.S. MD plans prior to the rollout of USG strategy, "GOR reaction to the involvement of

MOSCOW 00004505 002 OF 003

Czech Republic and Poland would have been very different." Kremenynk stressed that the GOR position on U.S. MD reflects Russia's fundamental objective that it be "recognized as an equal partner on what are, intrinsically, issues of mutual concern."

16. (C) Inextricably tied to Russia's pursuit of international recognition is the effort to increase its influence beyond its neighborhood on issues important to the West. Russia is willing to pay the price of criticism for its relations with countries like Syria and Venezuela, and radical groups like Hamas and Hezbollah. Kortunov and Migranyan asserted that Russia's established ties with these regimes or organizations are partly intended to strengthen its leverage over the U.S. on issues of vital national interest, such as U.S. MD plans in Europe. Migranyan added that Putin has increased his contact with Muslim leaders - including his most recent trip to Indonesia and the UAE and Saudi National Security Advisor Prince Bandar's July visit to Moscow - in response to the Muslim world's "clear call" to Russia to balance U.S. influence in the region.

Defend Territorial Integrity of States

17. (C) Russian Institute of Strategic Studies Director Sergey Kozhokin stressed that Putin is convinced that the UN Charter principle of territorial integrity must dictate the international community's approach to the frozen conflicts in Kosovo, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Transnistria. Migranyan agreed, stressing that Russia has resisted the temptation to recognize Abkhazia and South Ossetia in part because it does not want to create a precedent in international law. Most experts reiterate the conventional wisdom that if the West unilaterally recognized Kosovo, Russia would likely be forced to recognize Abkhazia and South Ossetia, but it strongly prefers the status quo. Among other things, the status quo allows Russia to keep its hands in the internal affairs of Georgia and Moldova, and it keeps a lid on secessionist tendencies in North Ossetia.

¶8. (C) Most experts predicted that Russia will maintain its commitment to veto any UNSC Kosovo settlement plan that is not fully backed both by Serbia and Kosovo. Kozhokin noted that Russia anticipates the U.S. will ultimately follow through on its commitment to recognize Kosovo, but the lack of a UN mandate and the "likelihood of disastrous and bloody consequences" following unilateral recognition will further tarnish the U.S. image.

Include All Stakeholders in Conflicts

¶9. (C) Lavrov's speech reinforced the notion that Russian foreign policy also rests on the principle that the sine qua non of effective conflict resolution is that all parties, "even the undesirables," should have a seat at the negotiating table. Otherwise, the settlement agreement will be meaningless. Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Saltanov reinforced this point during an August 30 discussion with the Ambassador on U.S. efforts to establish stability in Iraq and the Middle East Peace Process, noting that the involvement of countries like Syria and radical Islamic groups were essential to any settlement in conflict zones in the Middle East (ref A). Experts pointed out that a gradual, consensus-driven approach to conflict resolution is also a key factor in Russia's foreign policy. Kozhokin argued that the difficult situation in Iraq "validated" the GOR's "go slow" approach to Iran. Migranyan put it more colorfully: "Driving a dangerous man into a corner will only bring about dangerous consequences."

Minimize Outside Influence in Its Neighborhood

¶10. (C) Most analysts said that, unlike the Kosovo situation, the entry of Ukraine and Georgia in NATO represents an "unthinkable" predicament for Russia. Lavrov stated during his remarks that "Russia has been and will remain against all unilateral or coalition approaches to international affairs that undermine the principle of equal security, which includes not only MD, but the expansion of NATO." Experts agreed that although Russia's leverage over former FSU states has weakened, as most have made a clear choice to integrate into Western structures, Russia still hopes to cause enough trouble in Georgia and is counting on continued political disarray in Ukraine to minimize the prospects for further NATO expansion eastward. In Central Asia, Russia has placed increasing importance on the Shanghai Cooperation Organization to manage China's growing interests in the region and minimize U.S. influence (ref B).

MOSCOW 00004505 003 OF 003

Promote Russian Exports

¶11. (C) Economic development remains a driving force behind Russian foreign policy. Research Fellow at the Russian Institute for Strategic Studies Sergey Mikhailov told us that Russia will sell its raw materials and goods, including arms, to anybody with cash. Kozhokin agreed, reiterating Lavrov's statements that "messianism" remains conspicuously absent from Russian foreign policy. As long as Venezuela, Iran, Syria, Sudan, and other countries of concern remain paying customers, Russia will continue to supply them with advanced weapons. Analysts claim that the anti-American nature of this policy is only an "added bonus," noting that these sales bolster Putin's support among the hardliners in his administration.

¶12. (C) Kortunov underscored GOR thinking that despite tough rhetoric from the West about Russia's political record and a more assertive foreign policy, U.S. and European businesses are still very much interested in investing in Russia. The EU remains dependent on Russia for its energy and raw

material needs, and thus mutual dependence will moderate Western reaction to Russia's domestic and foreign policies.

Comment

¶13. (C) A common theme in our discussions with analysts is that Russia is politically and economically not strong enough to be viewed by the U.S. as an equal, but not weak enough to be ignored. Most analysts do not expect the current tensions between the U.S. and Russia on key issues such as Kosovo and U.S. MD plans to dissipate prior to the presidential elections in both countries, and concede they may get worse.

Burns